THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

Editors: K. Sundararama Aiyar M.A., & T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar B.A.

VOL. 2.] THURSDAY JUNE 20, 1918. [No. 9.

The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

Annual Subscription Rs. 6 only.
For *bona fide* students Rs. 3 only.
Single copy As. 2 only.

All business communications and remittances to be addressed to the Manager and all literary contributions and books for Review to be addressed to the Editor, THE HINDU MESSAGE, *Srirangam.*

A Vision Of India.

NARMADA.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

O Narmada! Thou bear'st a blessed name—
The giver of life's utmost sweetness here!
All through the moving cycle of the year
With daily prayers we praise thy wondrous fame.
Ah from sin's serpents with sharp fangs like flame
That strike our shuddering hearts with deadly fear
Protect and save. We come from far and near
To thee and thy sweet saving uplift claim.
Yon westward flow to bear to restless seas
That moaning seek for rest from shore to shore
Beneath the splendours of the changeful moon
The message great of India' soul—the peace
That comes from God through Love's wide-opened door
And is to perfect souls God's chosen boon.

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 20, JUNE, 1918.

The Proposed Special Congress.

Is there any reason why the Congress should have a special session at this juncture? Can such a meeting now avail in pressing forward the pace of the reform movement or in making the coming reform assume the form and character we wish it to do? Should we accept whatever is offered to us, whether it is the full Rupee, or eight annas, or four, or even an anna only, in the Rupee? Who is to be the President of the Special Congress Session? These questions are being everywhere discussed, and we make no apology for expressing our own views regarding them.

In the first place, the Special Congress Session must follow, not precede, the announcement soon to be made of the reforms finally resolved on, and given shape, to, by the British Ministry. There are evidently two schemes before the Ministry,—one Mr. Montagu's and the other the Viceroy's. Certainly the former ought to prove the more liberal of the two, as Mr. Montagu is free from the bureaucratic associations which influence the policy and measures of His Excellency the Viceroy *in Council*. But even the Secretary of State must, to some extent at least, have taken his lessons in various matters from the bureaucratic masters who have the right divine to govern India wrongly—*i.e.*, to govern in their own interest and contrary to the wishes and feelings of the people. Hence, Congressmen all over the land must be wide awake and ready with the full force and unanimity of Indian public opinion at its back when it demands the "full Rupee" scheme framed in conjunction by the National Congress and Muslim League, without being discoloured and corrupted by the poison of disastrous or dastardly compromise. We know how easy it is for any educated Indian to earn the credit of moderation or common sense in matters like these. Especially in a community like ours where the slavish spirit of subserviency to a dominant class of rulers has become ingrained, during centuries of subjection, into the very bone and marrow of the national constitution, men are easily apt to feel flattered or pleased beyond limits when they are patted on the back, or given a frontal or caudal appendage in the shape of a title, by the members of that class. Every limb quivers with the elation caused by the flow of warmth in the blood when one feels that he is the special favourite and protegee of a high-placed official and can take advantage of his favoured position to lord it over his less fortunate brethren whom a cruel fate has prevented from getting close to the bureaucratic throne of grace. Our leaders must know that it is only by their stiff-necked persistence in the demands already made by the Congress that they can enable the enfeebled national spirit to maintain itself at the stage of elevation to which it has been worked up under the high pressure put upon it by the enthusiasm, energy, and effort of a generation of sturdy and patriotic Congress-workers. There are still many among us who cannot realise the degradation and shame of making a foolish exhibition of the

green-eyed monster which has caught hold of their hearts, and in such a manner that neither education, nor association with higher men, has been able to exercise it, or to restore to them the sense of the infinite worth of the soul of man and of its infinite capacity for growth when placed in the environments of freedom which are best suited to it. It is such men who cause mischief by coming forth out of their accustomed obscurity and seclusion at this stage of sure promise or hope of freedom. It is they on whose tongue and limbs the curb of the strong, sturdy, and manly spirit of patriotism and statesmanship must be kept so as to overawe them and overpower their capacity for mischief.

We now proceed to consider the view that we should avail ourselves of whatever is offered—whether it is two annas in the Rupee, or even one—and try to remain content, and even pleased. Whether we like it or not, when parliament passes a measure of reform, it becomes law, and all *must* avail themselves of it who are engaged in public work, or care for it. But we cannot consent to keep our mouth gagged either now when the measure is still on the anvil, or later on when we get what we do not ask for or what fails to meet our expectations or the needs and circumstances of our situation. We must not forget that, so long as we are not permitted to take our rightful place among the self-governing communities of the Empire,—so long as the intolerable stigma of being a dependent nation is attached to us—we can have no honourable treatment accorded to us, either within or without the Empire. This stigma must be removed now, or it will never be. Dr. Wilson has proclaimed the principle of self-determination for all races and communities. America cheerfully granted the right of self-determination to the Filipino nation within a very few years of their transfer from Spain to America. India is denied the right to freedom,—a right which she once enjoyed for thousands of years and which she lost when vanquished in the struggle with barbarous or semi-civilised races from without. Having lost it, she has not been able to regain it even after a century and a half of British rule with its boasted record of progress and enlightenment. Now is the time to win back her lost treasure of freedom, when a great world-crisis has arisen, the entire destiny of humanity is put into the melting-pot, and the leaders of men are called on to devise ways and means for freeing civilisation from the perils which have overtaken, if not also overwhelmed, it. If, at this time, Indian leaders do not come forward to proclaim the rights, aspirations, deserts, and needs of their people, they will only have earned for all time the ignominy of having courted disaster and sunk, even more than now, into the humiliation of slavery merely through their internal jealousies, their decadent lethargy and their fatal subservience to men in authority. No doubt, the demands of the Congress have been made known to the men in power here and in England. But, in modern politics, restless activity and self-assertion can alone avail,—for there is ever the clash and conflict of parties, and only those can win who keep constant watch and ward over the arena of strife and put down the enemy's inroads,—whether made in a sustained manner or only sporadically —without the slightest hesitation, or

delay, or the least failure in the vigour of our response.

Lastly, who is to be the President of the special session of the Congress? This is no doubt an important question, but not of so much importance as many are apt to suppose. We have, indeed, always held that personality is of at least as much importance as principle in the couduct of human affairs. Still, we must have in view the particular circumstances of the moment when we are called on to act. At the present moment, we are chiefly concerned with the pressing on the attention of the British Parliament and Ministry the importance and urgency of conceding the demand of the Congress-League Scheme as a large initial step to the granting of full responsible government at an early future date. What is most needed now is the making of a united demand by the two great communities of India working with the fullest measure of consolidated harmony. At this supreme and critical moment, we think it well that a Mohammedan leader should be chosen to preside, so that the enthusiasm of that community may be enlisted in full and the utmost concord and unity of hearts may prevail. The Rajah of Mahmudabad ought, in our view, to have been selected as President of the Congress of December last in Calcutta, and it was a mere accident that he was not. Now, therefore, the honor should go to him, and it will be well for the Congress cause that he is selected. Of course, we have always before us the stately and towering personality of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, with its striking combination of intellectual vigour with spiritual power, of wonderful energy with unique strength of will, of unlimited power of self-forgetfulness with the most unshrinking endurance of suffering. There are many everywhere who eagerly desire that he should be made President of the special session. Can any heart be truly Indian, and yet not feel the glow of enthusiasm, joy, and pride at the very mention of the name of one who is foremost among all Indians for all that is great in what the genius of the Indian race has most valued? While we shall certainly rejoice if Mr. Tilak is chosen as President, we think it consistent with the circumstances and requirements of the moment that a sturdy Mohammedan Congressman like the Rajah of Mahmudabad should be selected as the best representative of the aims and impulses of the nation in this critical hour of India's fate and fortune.

Artistic Progress in India.

With Aristotle the source of the creative faculty is the primitive impulse of imitation or reproduction and, it is upon the materials supplied by nature that human reason and taste works so as to produce results which are capable of being distinguished from those which are merely due to the human understanding working through sense-perception. Aristotle's views have had a permanent influence on all future conceptions of European art. The only subsequent addition is the perception of the need of an appeal to the imagination so as to rouse the emotions and satisfy man's sense of the picturesque and the sublime. To some extent this work had already been done by Plato whose doctrine of the *archetypal Idea* enabled him to discover that the function

of the artist is not only reproductive of what is before us, but also creative by supplying from his own imagination an ideal element through which an appeal is made to the human emotions. Later on, however, this early impulse was taken up once again and worked up till at last, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it became—chiefly through the initiative of Addison—a recognised principle that, while art includes all the phenomena in which the processes of selection and combination are all pre-meditated and applied so as to give pleasure, the essence lies in their appeal to the imagination, and therefore apart from all considerations of practical utility or necessity.

Such being the nature and aim of art, the question arises, can there be progress in art for a community? Some deny it, chiefly on two grounds. *First*, art, like the human community, rises, grows, and then decays. Both are born without the exercise of will, and both pass through the periods of youth, maturity, and old age. *Secondly*, the art of a community cannot, like its science, be taken up, utilised, and advanced by another from the point where it has left it. Art, also, is the peculiar growth of a people or of an age, and cannot be easily transplanted. Taste, of which art is the characteristic product, is a peculiarity which is neither accountable nor transferable, and is known to decline among a people even when it maintains its position or progress in knowledge, power, wealth, or morality.

All the above reasoning, however, is futile. For, art is a form of human activity, and therefore has its rise in the intellect and will of man. As man exercises his intellect and will in other matters, so also he exercises it in the production of art. The artistic quality of the mind differs in different communities, and hence the expression of the common will in art differs in different communities even as it differs in religion or in politics. Indeed, art is not a phenomenon seen in isolation in society, but is influenced by the intellect, will, and conscience of humanity quite as much as its conceptions of the state or soul or its ideals of morality. The late eminent poet, William Morris insisted that art is intimately connected with social well-being, and an expression of what men most value. It may be that nations differ in their capacity for art, but there is no community, even the most primitive, that has not some amount of artistic capacity and has not produced some works of art, however primitive they may be in conception or execution.

The idea that there can be no progress in art is due to the fact that, during the nineteenth century, art has tended to decline everywhere in Western Europe. It is due to the fact that the leading nations of West Europe have been fully occupied, since the middle of the eighteenth century, in the race for exploitation of weaker communities and the struggle for supremacy or suzerainty over the rest of the world. The cry everywhere has been for the unlimited increase of wealth, power, and population. The minds of men have been bent down to the earth instead of soaring aloft towards heaven and its glories. The prevailing ideal has been that of "the economic man"; and the men of Europe have been so successful in their efforts to despoil other races and destroy their own systems of social,

economic, and political organisation that they have had no time or inclination to cultivate their higher emotions or their finer tastes. Utilitarianism has been the fashionable doctrine of the modern age in Europe, and has exercised its influence in every branch of life and thought in all European Communities. Even art has been unable to escape the influence of the utilitarian spirit, and has been chiefly occupied in portraying events, scenes, and personages connected with the story of man's progress in material gains and acquisitions. The ideal life of man has receded in public estimation, and God has been dismissed from human thoughts or even from the universe and beyond its precincts. Reality is that which is in the making, and God as the highest reality, is that which is to come last into being and therefore that which is never-to-be, or is to be only in a future which, the more you approach Him, recedes into a more distant future. It is, thus, natural that when the ideal in thought, or in action or in aspiration is denied or denounced as a figment of the brain, the artistic activity, aspiration or achievement of the community is no longer a reality. Men follow the fatalistic policy of denying the possibility of progress in that realm of human activity where human aspiration is thwarted at every turn and stagnation or even decline has become irresistible.

Let us now turn to Indian art. Here we see a phenomenon unmatched or unknown in Europe. The aim of Indian art is always the same, but the processes of its work and the form in which it clothes itself may ever vary with the varying forms of men's experience and the amount of their knowledge of the material world. Our scriptures have proclaimed for all time the aims, aspirations, and activities proper to our race. The Supreme Atman—the one noumenal reality, the one only without a second—is ever the experience whose enchantment attracts the enthusiasm, and fills the heart of man. It is within us, about us, and above us. One act of intuition (साक्षात्कार)—and we reach at a bound its equally reachless and fathomless depths of sweetness and joy. But, it may be asked, how can Art comprehend or reveal that which is unrealisable except by the transcendent vision of the Yogin or the Jnani?

The answer to this question is that this entire universe consisting of names and forms, of personalities of all kinds, of Gods, of Rishis, of Munis, of powers and functionaries, of life and lifeless matter in all sorts, conditions and grades, are only the phenomenal manifestations of the one Reality or Supreme Self which pervades and sustains them. The most glorious of these manifestations are known as thə *Vibhutis* or potencies of the Supreme Self. Arjuna asks Sri Bhagavan:—

> केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ।
> विस्तरेणात्मनो योग विभूतिं च जनार्दन ॥
> भूयः कथय
>
> "In what special manifestations (of time), O Lord, art thou to be meditated upon? Once more relate to me in extended detail thy unlimited lordly power (of sustaining the world by Yoga) and the specially glorious forms which are to be meditated on)."

It is for purposes of meditation and the realisation which follows upon

meditation that the sages have declared the forms of the divinity in all their glory and majesty. The description and recitation of them all and of the history of their dealings with man and all other living forms are to be learned from the sacred books of the Hindus, and have ever formed the source of inspiration for the Indian artist,—for the sculptor, the painter, the poet, the musician, and also for the architect. They are the many living forms aud names of the one divine reality, nameless and formless, transcending all conception and description, and it is through them—through the meditation of their forms—that we rise to the purification which brings on the one-pointedness of mind which precedes its dissolution into the self-effulgence of the Supreme Reality. It is to aid the worshipper's imagination and concentration of mind and to enable him to reap the spiritual benefits of these processes that the trained artist works with his materials of all kinds and produces the most picturesque and sublime effects. What the one inconceivable and transcendental Reality is in itself, these *Vibhutis*—these glorious aspects or manifestations of it—reveal to us; and the artist's work helps to stir our emotions by helping the mind to concentrate and lose itself in the contemplation of their beauties and splendours. Mr. Gladstone once spoke of "the travail of the spirit in devotion." The Vedas themselves, and their interpreters, the Rishis, in their Smritis, Itihasas, Puranas, have helped the Hindu worshipper by revealing all the true and essential forms and manifestations. The work of the artist—whether sculptor, painter, poet, musician or architect,—is to help him to get rid of the "travail" of his spirit in devotion by reproducing them in the way best suited to attract the haman emotions to them and to concentrate the mind on them with a view to lift it above itself when the time for the realisation of the Supreme Self is ripe.

So far as the revelation of the glories manifestations, and powers of the Supreme Self is concerned, it has been made once for all by the Indian sages in the sources of sacred knowledge with which they have endowed the Hindus for all time. Their content and import have been fixed for all time, though it is wrong to suppose that the knowledge of them has become stereotyped and so cannot touch the emotions of the worshipper. The truth is that, only as the worshipper's endeavours grow in the intensity of faith and love, the knowledge of the attributes and glories of the manifestations of the Lord will become more and more accurate and direct, till at last the entire import of the accounts given in the sacred books stand revealed in all their surpassing grandeur. While the accounts given by the sages remain the same for ever, there is an ever-progressive growth in the experience and conception of them gained by the mind of the worshipper. The work of the artist, progresses in a hundred ways as he grows in his command of the resources of his art and in his power to employ them with effect to aid the efforts of the worshipper first to visualise, and then to realise before his mind's eye, the glories of his chosen object of worship and meditation.

All our images in temples or on canvas, the delicate succession of delicious musical sounds running on into

those intricate involutions which captivate the ear in Hindu music, the portraiture of the history of our gods, and their avataras in our sacred poetry, and the splendours of the sculpture and architecture of our temples,—all these are intended to aid the worshipper in his successful achievement of this process of meditation. Even the description or portraiture of natural and pastoral scenes has the same aim,—for all nature is, to the Hindu, instinct with the living presence, and the ineffable glories of the Supreme Being who is one only and transcends, all the limitations of matter and form. Those who condemn the so-called Hindu idolatry are entirely ignorant of this great and fruitful aim of Hindu image-worship so-called. We do not worship the image, but the Supreme Being of whom the image is the consecrated manifestation, equally with every part and particle of the universe. He who worships with this thought and knowledge in his mind is no idolator. No Hindu is an idolator, for he worships not the consecrated image, but the Brahman of whom the image is the reminder or the revealer when he is immersed in the depth of his effort at concentrating his mind on the Lord. The image only serves as a peg which the concentrating mind is to take hold of; and with its aid the mind gets dissolved when the Lord reveals himself in all his glory,—when the mind becomes one-pointed in its meditative effort.

The above shows that there is no idolatry in India, and that every successful effort of the artist to present,—whether in temples or elsewhere, whether by appealing to the sight or the ear of the worshipper—such images or ideas as correspond to the accounts given of the divine Vibhutis and other personalities revealed in our sacred books, is a help to the Hindu worshipper in the accomplishment of the aims of his spiritual activity. It is here that the artist can avail himself of the resources and appliances of modern knowledge in attaining to the perfection of his art. The conceptions of the sages remain the same for ever, and hence the artist's aim and intent must also remain the same. But his execution must vary with his surroundings, and there is ever room for adjustment and progress in response to the conditions of the age and the changes ever taking place in the environment.

Indian taste has been of late perverted by the cheap and ugly products, of the industry and art of the West. This process of degeneracy must be arrested. If India's taste is to be restored and regenerated, it must be by the revival of her religious conceptions and spiritual aims. So long as the attempt now proceeding with lightning speed to captivate her heart by the materialistic ideals of the West is made to succeed in larger and larger measure in the future, the present degeneracy will continue until a ruin analogous to that wrought in Europe has been brought about. The idea and the design of Indian art must be purely Indian. The modern Indian artist must be fed on the pure pabulum of the ideals and conceptions of the Vedas and the Rishis, and he must be made to study the ancient and pure model still surviving, and furnished in abundance, in the temples of India or in our caves and ruins of all kinds. All Western utilitarian influences must be rigorously avoided, and the

Indian artist must be made to imbibe the real spirit and significance of the spiritual traditions of his ancestors' art. It is by following this course that the Indian artist will again recover his power of self-expression and again make his own contribution to the building of a renovated Indian nation and to the achievement of a renewed unity and harmony of life which shall present features of simplicity, purity and beauty even surpassing the splendours of her heroic past.

Notes and Comments.

We are of opinion that Mr. Montagu's denunciation of Sir Subramania Iyer's letter to President Wilson was far more severe than the occasion demanded. If he had only condemned some of the language used as needlessly strong no one would or could disagree with him. But certainly we do not think he is justified in charging Sir Subramania Iyer with any real "impropriety." Nor has he given any reasons for his opinion. A mere *ipse dixit* can have no weight with men of reasoned convictions. Sir Subramania Iyer has ever been a most loyal subject of Great Britain, and always gratefully avowed and expressed his appreciation of the blessings of British rule. Like every other Indian, he holds and believes in the necessity and indispensableness of the British connexion for India, and has no manner of doubt that India must ever remain a part of the British Empire.

* * *

Mrs. Besant's forceful and masculine personality has impressed itself too strongly on the minds and imaginations of many Indians, and all of them are unable to resist her influence and blandishments. Sir Subramania Iyer has ever also been an ardent Theosophist. His predisposition towards Mrs. Besant arising from this circumstance combined with her masterful personality to make Sir Subramania Iyer a warm admirer, friend, and follower of hers. He has almost idolised her. and once at least he delivered a warm eulogy of her, recounting her previous birth and peregrinations in various parts of the world and identifying her with Hypatia of Alexandria, Bruno the Italian, and others. Such was the fascination and sway which she exercised over him that he allowed himself at her sweet well and pleasure, to be made and un-made the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. He has uniformly supported her action as President of the Theosophical Society, as Founder of the Home Rule League, as a champion of Hindu social institutions, as a radical social reformer, &c.. &c. Hence the shock of Mrs. Besant's internment was more than he could bear, and it was thereupon that he allowed himself, under the overpowering influence of his emotions and the disturbance caused to his mental equilibrium, to be led into writing this letter to President Wilson. It is these circumstances that account for the want of mental balance which is discernible in some parts of his letter, and the needless strength of the language used in it.

* * *

That the two American Theosophists who had for nearely ten years resided in peace and seclusion at Adyar should have immediately consented to leave their home to carry Sir Subramania Iyer's message to President Wilson is a circumstance which also shows the infinite extent of Mrs. Besant's influence over the theosophical mind. They, too, must have felt keenly the rebuff or punishment administered to Mrs. Besant, their Theosophical idol,—though the Madras Government were only disturbed about Mrs. Besant's politics, and not by her theosophical enchantments and the glamour under which her theosophical following laboured. Had it not been for these American birds of passage at Adyar and their readiness to undertake the mission entrusted to them, Sir Subramania Iyer's letter might never have been written at all, or the writing of it even suggested itself to those who were unduly affected by the policy of the Madras Government.

* * *

Mr. Montagu says :—"No action has yet been taken in the matter, and I am

communicating with the Viceroy." No one can at present say what this means, or is intended to foreshadow in the near future. We trust that nothing arbitrary is intended, though such strong condemnation as is implied in the use of the words "impropriety" and "disgraceful," to this letter of Sir Subramania Iyer to President Wilson seems somewhat threatening. Still, it is a little reassuring to be told that the assertions made in the letter are "too wild and baseless to require or receive notice from any responsible authority." Then, where is the need for "communicating with the Viceroy." Perhaps something like a warning is all that is intended, We will wait and see.

* * *

We are, however, of opinion that the Government would be making an absurd blunder if they failed to take note of the fact that the object of Sir Subramania Iyer's letter was to offer India's man power—ten millions of men—as help to end the war. To characterise this genuine act of loyalty as an "impropriety" or as "disgraceful", is a most extraordinary proceeding on the part of the Secretary of State for India. Moreover, Sir Subramania Iyer did not apply to Dr. Wilson for help of any kind, but only endeavoured to evoke and enlist his enlightened sympathy and that of his nation for the cause of India,—India once proud and great and free, but now fallen from her high estate, a dependent enfeebled in spirit, crouching at the feet of a crowned bureaucracy, and unable to rise from the mire into which she has got stuck. For man to seek his fellow-man's sympathy is a touch of nature which can merit no condemnation. India first appealed to the mercy and common sense of her rulers, and only now—after thirty years of fruitless waiting and wooing— seeks to enlighten the intellect and heart of the civilised world and to gain a hearing thereby from her rulers. There was here no plot, no, treachery to the government established by law, no divulging of state secrets, no offer of a tempting bribe, nothing done which is violation of the moral law recognised in the conduct of individuals or governing the intercourse of nations.

Is Mr. Bhupendranath Basu asleep at the comfortable Mansion at Whitehall, or dreaming sweet waking dreams? Is he engaged in preparing another and more drastic Civil Marriage Bill, and with the support and countenance of the India Office? India can derive no benefit from a sham representation by men like these sitting in the Secretary of State's Council?

* * *

Sir J. Rees is irrepressible even in his senility. Like the *Kottan* (கோட்டான்) of the Tamil land, he is blind to daylight and his vision is clear by the darkness of the night. The darkness of his own senility unfailingly lightens up for him the senility of other men, He asks:—"Is Mr. Montagu aware that the author of the letter is seventy-seven and that this was a senile production." By saying this, did Sir John Rees mean to do Sir Subramania Iyer a service or disservice? Our answer is—both a *service*, because it conveys a hint to Mr. Montagu that he should not make himself ridiculous by attempting to strike at a man whose thoughtlessness is due to his senility,—and a *disservice*, because he wishes to see Sir Subramania Iyer entirely discredited in the future. Sir Subramania Iyer is busy laying the foundations of a new creed which is to capture the hearts of all mankind in the future, and has declared himself the accredited representative of an unheard-of "spiritual hierarchy," now known as the *Suddha-Dharma-Mandala*, or society for the propagation of pure religion. Here is an *implied* stigma cast on all other creeds,—viz, that their doctrines and precepts are impure,—and that those who love pure religious teaching must seek his help and, through him, that of the hierarchy of which he is the commissioned representative in its dealings with the world. He is, thus, in fact the apostle of a new dispensation. A man who has this strange and soaring ambition is, by the irony of fate, simultaneously credited, with being the author of a "senile production." One may ask, also, whether senility can affect a part only of one's mind and activity, or extends to the whole of a man's life

and the courses of his thought. We think, however, that, when the time is ripe, Sir Subramania Iyer will be able to give a satisfactory account of himself and of his dealings with God and Man. We, at least, will confidently launch forth before the world with this daring prediction and cast it upon the waters to run its destined career.

Olla Podrida.

The season of marriages is in full swing. Silver and gold and precious stones change hands with startling rapidity. The bids in the marriage market are going up from year to year. By the time the season is over there will be broken health and broken fortunes all around. Our society has so arranged its matromonial etiquette nowadays that marriage is made a roaring farce tempered by exquisite agony.

***

Why on earth should it be like this? Some decades ago the religious side of marriages and their social and domestic sides as displayed by the gathering of relations and the profusion of glad and whole-hearted hospitality were prominent and made our weddings a means of realising our dependence on God and our social love and unity. Now the religious side is thrown into the background to such an extent that it has no appreciable elevating and purifying influence on anybody. The holy conception of *Kanyakadanam* is gone. The family circle has been flung to the ends of the earth by the stress of competition and the imperious necessity of keeping the wolf from the door. The relations assemble in a thin group and make a pretence of happy unity of heart. But they are full of their own troubles and long separation makes them feel to a large extent an unnatural strangeness. The glad and abundant hospitality of an earlier day has disappeared. The eye of the waiting crowd is upon the coins which stick to the fingers of the conductors of the present day matrimonial celebrations. Owing to this pathetic clinging to coins which are the subject of such greedy glare, the simple joys and the abounding friendliness of the older days have vanished altogether.

***

Those who have to celebrate marriages talk in a despairing way about the increasing expenditure on marriages. Thsoe who assemble in reform conferences declaim against such expenditure. Bridegroom prices, dowries, costly and useless presents etc., etc, etc. undergo strange and unnatural developments from year to year. Why should it be so? Sir T. Madhava Rao said once that no society in the world suffers so much from self-inflicted evils as the Hindu society. The only remedy is to reform the spirit of our education and restore the older sacramental conception of life and marriage. Otherwise the maddening crowd must run on till it becomes raving mad.

***

The older system of Hindu marriages was simple, happy, sacramental, and full of social unity and domestic affection. The modern Western system is simple and businesslike. But what is the present system among us like? The less said about it the better. SCRUTATOR.

National Education.

(BY S. MAHALINGA IYER B.A., B.L.)

In this article it is proposed to set forth some of the reasons why the present Government system of education in this country requires complete overhauling and a radical reform. From the circumstances of the case it would even appear that a mere reform of it—some necessary alterations here and there, but keeping the main structure unimpaired—is impossible. If we agree that such is the case we should be prepared to abandon it altogether, and devise and establish a new one in its stead.

Let us examine briefly what should be the true aims of education, and how far the present system subserves their attainment. What is education? Why is education needed for human children? The human child when born into the world is far less equipped for its life than the young ones of lower animals. All animals other than man are born with instincts which suffice to sustain them through life. With the human child it is different. It has to remain in a state of greater dependence upon its parents and for a comparatively longer

period than other animals. The child learns to stand on its legs, to walk, and to talk by unconscious imitation as well as by conscious training by those around it. It acquires some knowledge about the things that surround it—not alone their names, but their properties and their relations to one another and to human life. The home is the child's first school. In a short time it exhausts learning about the objects, within the home. When the child grows into a boy, its quest for knowledge covers a wider range,—the street, the village or town, the society, and the outside Nature. At school this process of learning is intensified. The boy learns much more rapidly and to a much greater extent about the outside world than he could if he were left to learn only by the play of his unaided faculties. Children have implanted in them an innate desire to learn. "Children gather knowledge through love of life." Education is, in one aspect, a systematic provision to satisfy their imperious craving to know.

Under the present system of education, it is true that children are given a knowledge of the world. But it is unique to the educational system of India that the child lives inside the school in a mental world which is altogether different from the actual world outside the school. The lessons taught relate to English life,—English names, English scenery, English manners and all are taught in the English language. It is a Jack or a Jane that greet him in his lessons, but not a Ramasawmy or Seethalatchmy. His lesson refers to a daisy which he has not seen and will perhaps never see, and not to a lotus or jasmine which he daily sees. In the High School and the College are taught English Literature, English History, and European philosophy and polity by English teachers. The whole system is abnormal and injurious to the mental growth of the pupil. There is a great deal of waste of energy in learning a foreign language and the knowledge gained in the school and college not being related to the home and the society in which the pupil lives, moves, and has his being, is necessarily of an inferior and fugitive type, not easily kept in the mind nor of much use in life.

Secondly, education has its utilitarian aspect. It forms a training with a view to equipping the boy for life. He must be taught such knowledge as would enable him to earn his livelihood, and find and fill his place in Society. This is what is meant by vocational education. The life of a Society is maintained by a variety of occupation among its members. The education of the youth of a country should be so organised that there is a regular and sufficient supply of trained and qualified members to all the professions and services that the Society may need for the maintenance of its stable and progressive life. There must be agricultural, industrial, and commercial, education and other kinds of vocational education provided for according to the approximate needs of the Society, so that there may be no over-manning or under-manning of the various services and occupations. Does the prevailing system of education subserve this purpose? The present system of English Education owes its origin, as every one knows, to the desire of the British rulers to create a class of men who may act as interpreters between the rulers and the ruled. In the effort to establish and consolidate a foreign administration over a subject population widely differing in manners, customs and culture from the ruling race, the latter found it desirable to teach their language to a section of the people of this country and train them, and through them, their other fellow countrymen, to appreciate and accept the aims and methods of the new adminstration. In taking this view we dismiss, of course, as untenable the conceit of Macaulay and others of his line of thinking, that the British wanted to "civilise the natures" by teaching them European Science, Literature, and philosophy English education was, at its inception in the fiftees of the last century, primarily intended by the Government, and availed by the people, as the only means for securing Government employment—not even in the highe- ranks in the administration where the posts are reserved for foreigners, but in the subordinate and clerical services. The aim of educational effort has not materir

ally changed since. This fact has vitiated the whole system and has been productive of manifold evils. The pathetic frame of mind in which the newly passed B A,, resolves on joining the Law College, because as a graduate he is worth no more than the Rs. 20 a month which he could have got even as Matriculate or an Intermediate man, illustrates how little of correlation of means to ends there is in our educational system. Though there are a few Agricultural, Engineering, Medical and other professional colleges maintained by our government, the above criticism holds good in regard to the major portion of its educational activity in, our primary and Secondary Schools, and Arts Colleges.

Thirdly, education has not an exclusively utilitarian basis. Knowledge is not acquired by man solely that it may be employed for useful purposes of life. In this lies the most important distinction between the animals and man. As Rabindranath Tagore says, "The animals must have knowledge, so that their knowledge can be employed for useful purposes of their life. But there they stop. They must know their surroundings in order to be able to take their shelter and seek their food, some properties of things in order to build their dwellings, some signs of the different seasons to be able to adapt themselves to the changes. Man also must know because he must live. But man has a surplus where he can proudly assent that knowledge is for the sake of knowledge. There he has the pure enjoyment of knowledge, because there knowledge is freedom. Upon this fund of surplus his science and philosophy thrive." Again; "Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks its out-let in Art, for man's civilization is built upon his surplus." Here the word Art is used in the widest sense as including Religion, Literature, and the other Fine Arts; like Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture etc. All these are the expressions of the emotional elements in man's nature and add to the enjoyments of man. The self-expressions of a race or nation in its artistic or emotional life constitute its culture. Each race has its own mode of self-expression, its own view and understanding of life; and its own mode of ordering life and extracting from life as much enjoyment as possible. Now, the children belonging to a particular race should be educated only along the lines of its particular culture. Under the present educational system, the children and youth of our country are not educated in their national culture for national ends. As Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy says, "The most crushing indictment of English education in India is the fact that it destroys, in the great majority of those upon whom it is inflicted, all capacity for the appreciation of Indian culture......The Indian is made a stranger in his own land." Again, "you cannot educate by ignoring the ideals of the taught, and setting up an ideal which they do not at heart acknowledge. Of the two types of English Schools in India, the government and the missionary, the one ignores, and the other endeavours to break down the ideals of the home." Sir George Birdwood says: "Our education has destroyed their love of their own literature, the quickening soul of a people and their delights in their own arts and, worst of all their repose in their traditional and national religion. It has disgusted them with their own houses, their parents, their sisters, their very wives. It has brought discontent into every family so far as its baneful influences have reached it. In one word, English education has caused the denationalisation of those who have come under its influence, and has, therefore, been the cause of deep and widespread religious, moral, and economic degradation of the people.

Thus it is seen how the present system of education is defective in fundamental and essential points. It has killed the indigenous systems of Vernacular and Sanskrit education. It has brought into existence a large mass of educated unemployed, who represent a fearful waste of individual and social energy and who form a danger to the well-being of the whole community. It has warped to a calamitous extent the popular out-look on life, by raising Government service to a pedestal of exaggerated importance, and making

it an apple of discord among the different communities and promoting strife and ill will between them in their mad competition for the loaves and fishes of office. It has caused a perverse and unwholesome adjustment of social values,—so that an English educated matriculate thinks he has, and enjoys, more value than a deeply learned Tamil or Sanskrit Pandit, and a Sub-registrar's clerk asumes airs of superiority before a Mirasdar owning 100 Velies of land. The system of bridegroom prices is a by-product in addition to the evils enumerated above—having had its first origin in the quest by girl's fathers for bridegrooms with passes and degrees, and it was thought— an indefinite vista of honours and emoluments in Government Service.

In short almost every soul of degradation which we see in every department of our National life, can be ascribed to the influence, direct or indirect, of English education. Political freedom, economic emancipation, and national self-respect can be regained only by mending or if that be impossible, as it may well appear by ending the present system of education, and by substituting in its stead another system framed on national lines and under National Control.

Correspondence.

Sri Sankaracharya.

Though there are a sufficient number of cultivated minds competent and interested in Sanskrit scholarship and research, it is a deplorable fact that there is no authoritative treatise at present about the life of Sri Sankara corresponding to the more serious publications of the kind common in England dealing with serious and original thinkers in all branches of human enquiry That enterprising firm of publishers, G. A. Natesan, have indeed produced a small booklet by C. N. Krishnaswami Iyer entitled "Sri Sankaracharya, His life and times" which in spite of its promising title, we close with disappointment. I do not quarrel mainly with the meagre treatment given by the author, but the way in which he gives ready but not valuable opinions on the incidents connected with the great guru's life. After all, the most important thing and that which contributes to the success of a biographer's undertaking is the spirit with which he approaches his subject and this applies in a great degree to the consideration of the life of such an one as the author has undertaken to write. That spirit must be one of reverence for the person and the ideals which he stands for. Moreover instead of passing judgments right and left, a faithful narration of facts borne out by history or tradition and what great men thought of them would be important and interesting. It is easy to dispute the historicity of incidents considered supernatural occuring in an epoch far removed from our own, as it is the fate of everything supra-mental or beyond the ken of our ordinary mentality, but any indulgence of criticism or pleasantry at their expense would lead to no fruitful results. There are moreover serious omissions and imperfect statements in the book but it is not my purpose to give a comprehensive review of the book.

Sri Sankaracharya has been considered an incarnation of Siva and whether an avatar or an exceptional individual or Vibhuti, one must realise tho more than human force and influence he brought to bear on the social and religious questions of the age and if he was not divine incarnation he must have had at least a divine purpose in him to have given us his great message of spiritual growth and realisation. At a time of India's great crisis in her spiritual history which blurred her intellectual vision and endangered the prospect of her full self-unfolding, the great Mahatma with the divine mission of reestablishing ancient dharma did what in the words of Mr. Aurobinda Ghose, was the function of an avatar, *i.e.*, "reshaped the divine law and kept the Godward effort of humanity from retrogression." His trenchant clearness of the analytical method restored the balance between Jnana and Karma and to say like our author that Sankara reconciled Jnana and Karma "in a spirit of compromise" is to misunderstand the character and purpose of his teachings. At one place his conquest over Mandana Misra which was one of the brilliant episodes in his life by which Vedantism was firmly established, is described by the author as "the greatest achievement" of his life, and in the same breath his yogic adventures connected with "the long and tedious account of Mandara's conversion," is "rejected

as undemonstrable." The formidable array of shastric lore which this mighty intellect devoured in his eighth year dismays our author when he repudiates this claim; but if one remembers the achievement of a mill, a Gladstone and a Macaulay in their youth, it would be easy to concede higher possibilities in one greater than these. The author characterises Gnana Yoga as "a sorry substitute" for Bhakti and opines that "the weak point in his system is the prominence given to Jnana and the injunction to mechanically repeat the formula, 'I am Brahman'." According to a high authority, "yoga knowledge is god possession through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Realiiy. It is to put on the divine being and the divine nature." Even so Extatic devotion leads to indentification of the Bhakta to the object of his worship. Again his injunction is not to "machanically repeat the formula" as the author says, but to learn from the Veda and by reasoning the nature of self which is the informing spirit beyond the body, absolutely real by nature"—

The Message which India gave to the West and yet more to give is not sufficiently acknowledged. The contribution of our Vedanta in enriching and elevating western thought is often lost sight of. The writings of Gœthe, Kant. Schopenbaurs Dussen, Carlyle, Emerson, and even her new theology bear ample evidence of the permiation of Western thought by Indian philosophy. As Dr A. K. Coomarasmy has said "The east has indeed revealed a new world to the west, which will be the inspiration of a 'Renaissance,' more profound and far reaching than that which resulted from the re-discovery of the classic world to the west,' And was not the unity of existence which was the important teaching of the Vedanta prominently brought forward by Sankara? Yet the author characterises the emphasis laid on Jnana as the weak point in his System. There are also some small points in the book which appearing as it does without any support from any stated authority makes the reader question the author's correctness of his positions. For example I may refer to the author's calling the favourite disciple of Sri Sakara i.e. Padmapada as a vain man. Lastly, the history of the various mutts is dealt with by the author in a few sentences. Perhaps a bigger venture than the book under consideration, is required to satisfactorily deal with this as with other facts connected with Sankara and his successors. But I may remark the author stops with remarking that the Kumbakonam Mutt is a comparatively modern one and has only a limited following in Tanjore and the adjoining districts, It is not true that it has only a limited following and as to its date I may remark that the earliest copper plate grant in Kumbakonam Mutt is of the 13th Century. In this connection the interesting volume by Mr. T. A. Gopinatha Rao about the copper plates in Kumbakonam Mutt would be interesting reading. Originally this peetha was in Conjeevaram and at the time of Mahomedan tyranny in the 17th century the Guru of the time was invited by the Raja of Tanjore and as Kumbakonam was found more suitable, a Mutt was built there, and ever since, that time the peetha is there.

In conclusion, I wish to state that I write this in the belief that the author might be persuaded to give a fuller treatment in future editions of his work and to adopt a tone that would appeal more largely to Indian readers.

Since writing the above I come to understand that there is a fuller treatise on the Life of Sankara by Mr. T. S. Narayana Sastriar.

A. G. SANKARA IYER.

Our birth right.

Is, the Home Rulers say, to have Self-Government within the Empire. This is very patriotic indeed and captures one's imagination. But what is *Birth-right*? It is, I believe, *a right which invaluably attaches to one's birth*; which, whether claimed or disclaimed, is still there clinging to one and is co-existent with one from the moment of birth. It only waits to be enjoyed and exercised as one gets in fulness of time to realise and recognise it in one's self and life. It is, in other word, सहज. What is *Sahaja* has, it will be admitted, a value quite all its own and whatever is valuable is something worth having enjoying and experiencing. Thus it would be clean that what is claimed as birth-right is nothing most precious on Earth, as without it, birth may as well be defective, nay, may not be worth its name too. When this *right* has been recognised as such and put into active practice for any length of time, it becomes still more valuable and establishes a right for

self-recognition, a right which cannot be overthrown by anybody or under any circumstances. If a short space of time can secure for a *birth-right*, such an exclusive right of recognition and exercise, how much more force and strength it might secure as a result of its undisputed recognition and exercise through numberless ages! Such, in brief, are our *birth-rights*, I mean, the birth-rights of the Aryan Hindus of Bhartha Varsha;—rights which have become well-established and deep-rooted beyond up-rooting; rights which have been hugged heartily and embraced enthusiastically through centuries by Hindu generations and ought, on that very account, to be cherished with love and reverence, devotion and deference by succeeding posterity: rights again; which when they seem to dim or disappear have a right to be made to reappear in all brilliance and splendour.

Now then, how have we dealt with our birth-rights, rather, how *are we dealing with them*? Having been born into the sacred Aryan fold in the holy Arya Desa and having become the inheritors of whatever has been handed down as Aryan rights and cusoms from the dawn of creation, what do we do now? How far do we hold on to them now? What is the extent and nature of our love and regard for them now? say, in any domain of life. Compare for a moment, our present with the past. How true and devoted, loyal and faithful are we to our long Established and Cherished ideals of Aryan life and conduct. Is it not painful *my Aryan brethren who are never tired of styling yourselves as educated and civilised.* I say, is it not depressing and degrading, to contemplate our position degenerated and denationalised what looks like beyond redemption? Can we, with any shadow of justification, claim to be the sons and scions of the holy sages of yore, violating, as we do, every moment of our life, the vital principles enjoined and enunciated by them for our individual and communal uplift, spiritually and materially? Are we not proving traitors to our holy land and renegades of our hoary religion, by daily straying away from the lines of life chalked out and carved out for us by our all-wise and loving ancients? Have we not allowed ourselves to be misguided by fleeting fashions of the West, are we not permitting ourselves to be deluded into discarding and detesting whatever is ours, whatever is national' whatever is traditional and whatever is, above all, conducive to and compulsory for the preservation of our Dharma? Just look at the change which has come over most of us—in ways of thought, word and deed--We have bid good-bye to oriental and *Swadharma* modes of viewing our life and life problems; we have freely and with a false sense of stupid pride born of a mistaken notion of modern education and civilisation with their paralysing and pernicious effects, given up even the outward symbols of our religion and society; we have, in most cases, out of perversity I dare say, (here is no room for ignorance, for all are educated, and highly too...) freely taken to Western methods of cut and costume, in fact, we are rapidly stripping ourselves, one after another, day by day of whatever may yet remain to remind us of our proud past and godly glory!

If this state of affairs is a striking commentary on the regard we have for our birth rights (and duties no doubt; for there are no right without duties), how will the outside world understand the extent of our regard for Home Rule when granted, which, our political leaders claim as *birth right?* If we have scattered to winds all our *ancient and immemorial birth rights* so carelessly and ignominiously in the course of a short experience of something foreign, what guarantee is there that we will value and cherish as something most holy and precious, Home-rule which is being striven for by the leaders of to-day? Let we not be misunderstood please! The claim for Home-rule will be for stronger and more effective on the other hand, only when we prove and proclaim to the world and powers-that-be that we habitually and by instinct and custom love and regard admire and appreciate enjoy and exercise whatever we own as birth right.

Let our leaders take note of this fact and direct their activities in the right spirit not inconsistent with our Dharma, towards the achievement of their goal, and set a worthy and noble example as true Aryan Hindus to the younger generations who naturally look up to elders as models for guidance in the affairs of life.

Let both great and small realise the truth and significance of Manu's warning:—

येनास्य पितरो याता येन याताः पितामहाः ।
तेन यायात्सतां मार्गं तेन गच्छन्नरिष्यते ॥

J. S. R. SARMA.